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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 001167

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STATE FOR WHA/CCA AND WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2017

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [TD](#)

SUBJECT: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO - LIBERTAD ACT TITLE III REVIEW

REF: SECSTATE 158768

Classified By: DCM Leonard Kusnitz - reasons 1.4 (b/d)

(U) This message responds to reftel questions.

11. (C) QUESTION: What is the nature of investments that host country businesses have in Cuba?

ANSWER: Post is aware of no Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) companies or individuals with significant presence or investments in Cuba.

12. (C) QUESTION: Are there any bilateral trade agreements between host country and Cuba?

ANSWER: Trinidad & Tobago does not have a bilateral trade agreement with Cuba, but as a member of CARICOM, T&T has ratified the trade agreement between CARICOM and Cuba. In September 2007, T&T established a trade office in Havana to serve as a conduit between T&T manufacturers and Cuban state companies. The T&T Business Development Corporation, a public company affiliated with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, led a trade mission to Cuba to coincide with the dedication of the trade office.

13. (C) QUESTION: Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

ANSWER: Twenty-two Cuban doctors and eighteen Cuban nurses arrived in Trinidad on May 18 to begin two-year contracts with the Ministry of Health, working at public health facilities. They replaced seventy Cuban medical personnel whose contracts to serve in T&T expired earlier in 2007. Prime Minister Manning has told us in the past that he does not want to expand this cooperation.

In July, a team of Cuban agricultural advisors visited Trinidad to survey the proposed site for a 200-acre demonstration farm in Tucker Valley, Chaguaramas, a joint venture between the GOTT and Cuba aimed at introducing Cuban organic farming techniques to T&T. According to press reports, the project is scheduled to begin in March 2008 with the first harvest reaching the market in 2009.

14. (C) QUESTION: Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba? This can include: public statements or other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; statements in support of democracy following the July 31, 2006 handover of power from Fidel to Raul Castro; actions in support of

civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora.

ANSWER: Post is not aware of any GOTT initiatives in support of promoting democracy and human rights in Cuba.

15. (C) QUESTION: Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and host country in the past six months?

ANSWER: At Cuba's invitation, Prime Minister Patrick Manning led a trade mission to Cuba September 6-8, accompanied by his wife, then-Education Minister Hazel Manning; then-Minister of Trade and Industry Kenneth Valley; then-Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs Joan Yuille-Williams; and T&T soca artist Machel Montano. During the visit Manning reportedly held talks with Raul Castro. Also during the visit, in his remarks at the opening of the GOTT trade office in Havana, Manning stated that the GOTT will open an embassy in Havana "very shortly." Separately MFA sources have informed us that Donna Henry, currently chief of the Ministry's Division of Administration, has been nominated as the first GOTT Ambassador to Cuba. However, definitive dates for opening the embassy and for the public announcement of Mrs. Henry's appointment have yet to be set.

16. (C) Post believes it is in the U.S. national interest to suspend Title III of the Libertad Act for Trinidad & Tobago, based on T&T's contribution to U.S. energy security as a reliable supplier of oil and gas and its importance as an economic, political, and security leader in the eastern Caribbean. Trinidad also will host the next Summit of the Americas in early 2009.

AUSTIN